IN THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claim 2 without prejudice and amend the claims as follows:

1. (currently amended) A method for producing a preform from synthetic quartz glass by means of a plasma-assisted deposition process, said method comprising: supplying a hydrogen-free media flow containing a glass starting material and a carrier gas to a multi-nozzle deposition burner, introducing the glass starting material by means of the deposition burner into a plasma zone wherein the glass starting material is oxidized so as to form SiO_2 particles, and depositing the SiO_2 particles on a deposition surface while being directly vitrified, wherein the media flow is focused by means of the deposition burner towards the plasma zone**, and wherein the media flow is focused onto the plasma zone by means of a media nozzle of the deposition burner, said media nozzle tapering in the direction of the plasma zone**.

2. (canceled).

3. (currently amended) The method according to claim **1** ~~2~~, wherein when exiting from the media nozzle the media flow is enveloped by an oxygen-containing working gas flow.

4. (previously presented) The method according to claim 3, wherein the working gas flow turbulently exits from a first working gas nozzle of the deposition burner that is designed as a diffuser.

5. (currently amended) The method according to claim **4** ~~3~~, wherein when exiting from the working gas nozzle the working gas flow is enveloped by at least one oxygen-containing separating gas flow exiting from an annular gap nozzle coaxially surrounding the working gas nozzle.

6. (previously presented) The method according to claim 3, wherein the plasma zone is produced by means of high-frequency excitation inside a burner tube into which a mixture of media flow and working gas flow is introduced.

7. (previously presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the glass starting material in the media flow contains silicon tetrachloride ($SiCl_4$) and the carrier gas is nitrogen.

8. (previously presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the glass starting material contains a fluorine-containing component.

9. (previously presented) A device for producing a preform from synthetic quartz glass by means of a plasma-assisted deposition process, said device comprising an excitation source producing a plasma zone, and a multi-nozzle deposition burner which has a central axis and which is provided with a media nozzle supplying a a hydrogen-free media flow containing a glass starting material and a carrier gas to the plasma zone, wherein the media nozzle is configured to focus towards the plasma zone.

10. (previously presented) The device according to claim 9, wherein the media nozzle tapers in a tapering portion towards the plasma zone.

11. (previously presented) The device according to claim 10, wherein the tapering portion has a length of at least 5 mm.

12. (previously presented) The device according to claim 9, wherein the media nozzle has a nozzle opening with a diameter ranging between 4.5 mm and 6.5 mm.

13. (previously presented) The device according to claim 9, wherein the media nozzle is configured as a central middle nozzle and is coaxially surrounded by a working gas

nozzle defining therebetween an annular gap and which is configured as a diffuser and continuously expands in an expansion portion towards the plasma zone.

14. (previously presented) The device according to claim 13, wherein the expansion portion has a length of at least 5 mm.

15. (previously presented) The device according to claim 12, wherein the media nozzle has a nozzle opening which extends in a first nozzle plane extending in a direction perpendicular to the central axis, and that the working gas nozzle has a nozzle opening which extends in a second nozzle plane extending in a direction perpendicular to the central axis, the first nozzle plane, when viewed in the direction of flow, being arranged upstream of the second nozzle plane by a length between 5 mm and 35 mm.

16. (previously presented) The device according to claim 9, wherein the media nozzle is formed by a quartz glass tube.

17. (previously presented) The device according to claim 9, wherein the media nozzle is designed as a central middle nozzle and is coaxially surrounded by at least two annular gap nozzles supplying oxygen to the plasma zone.

18. (previously presented) The device according to claim 10, wherein the tapering area has a length of at least 8 mm.

19. (previously presented) The device according to claim 9, wherein the media nozzle has a nozzle opening with a diameter ranging between 5.0 mm and 6.0 mm.

20. (previously presented) The device according to claim 13, wherein the expansion portion has a length of at least 8 mm.

21. (previously presented) The device according to claim 12, wherein the media nozzle has a nozzle opening which extends in a first nozzle plane extending in a direction perpendicular to the central axis, and that the working gas nozzle has a nozzle opening which extends in a second nozzle plane extending in a direction perpendicular to the central axis, the first nozzle plane, when viewed in the direction of flow, being arranged upstream of the second nozzle plane by a length between 13 mm and 33 mm.